Free elmentary education in rural areas

1458. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister issued directions to his Ministry to make elementary education free in the rural areas and take decision to take care of all school expenses of the children, not just fees and mid-day meals;

(b) whether clearing the proposal under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Prime Minister has desired that all the school expenses, text books, stationery, public transport, uniform, meals be paid by the Government;

(c) if so, what are the steps being taken to implement all the suggestions made by the Prime Minister; and

(d) how many States have taken steps till now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The Government of India is already implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the cooked-mid-day meal programme which *inter-alia,* include certain components to offset the costs of elementary education. Further more, a Draft Free and Compulsory Education Bill alongwith a report has been submitted to and deliberated upon by the Central Advisory Board of Education in July 2005, which includes definition of "free education."

Strengthening professional education

1459. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to strengthen the professional education in Universities and colleges:

(b) if so, by when and the salient features of the professional education in view of requirement and the agencies involved for the purpose;

(c) whether necessary infrastructures are available for the professional education in the country; and

(d) if so, the reason therefor?